Life on board a Mediterranean merchantman in the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries BCE
Can a shipwreck be studied like households are being studied in archaeology?

**Household archaeology is fundamentally interested in how domestic space or domestic places are socially defined and socially constructed (i.e. through observing ‘activity areas’)**

Reconstruction of a household from the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey
Evidence from 3 shipwrecks will be used in this exercise
Considering the length of each voyage
**380 amphoras in 10 varieties: the majority from Rhodes and several from Samos**
Mendean amphoras filled with pitch and beef cuts (not wine!)

Monogram stamp on one amphora from the Ionian city of Erythrae

The Ionian context of the Tektaş Burnu shipwreck
There was no cargo in the Ma’agan Mikhael shipwreck, but its ballast of blue schist is sourced to the Aegean; the ‘galley wares’ of the ship are of Aegean, Cypriot and Levantine origin.
Considering the length of each voyage

- Tektaş
- Burnu (shorter itinerary)
- Kyrenia
- Ma’agan Mikhael (longer itinerary?)
The 1986 sea trials and itinerary of the Kyrenia II ship reconstruction

**600 nautical miles
**19 days (12 days sailing, 7 days at port)
**4-5 crew on each run
**but not carrying a full cargo
Life on board an ancient merchantman:

Challenge #1: How to distinguish ‘utilitarian’ objects from cargo
Ceramic vessels that are stowed as commodities (and not as containers) tend to be packed in bulk in storage jars.

Examples of 13 handled cups and bowls found in an amphora on Tektaş Burnu.
The Ma’agan Mikhael ship was not carrying amphorases and appears not to have been laden with cargo.

Pottery inventory (all identified at the stern of the ship) includes a cooking pot (with soot), bowls, jugs, lamps and a large storage container (not shown). **A total of 70 ceramic forms may have been used by the crew of the ship.**
Very similar assemblages have been identified at the sterns of the Kyrenia and Tektaş Burnu shipwrecks, with cooking jars and lamps showing evidence for use (burning).

Kyrenia (4 jugs, 4 bowls, 4 wooden spoons)

Ma’agan Mikhael

Tektaş Burnu
Why, in all periods, are ‘personal effects’ and ‘utilitarian objects’ regularly stowed at the stern of the ship
Eating, drinking and commensality on board a Mediterranean merchantmen

**Botanical remains**
- garlic and herbs
- barley
- figs
- grapes
- olives
- almonds and hazelnuts

**Animal protein**
- fishing net weights and hooks
- salted beef
- salted fish

Kyrenia, Ma’agan Mikhael, Tektaş Burnu

Ma’agan Mikhael, Kyrenia (net preserved)

Kyrenia, Ma’agan Mikhael, Tektaş Burnu
There is no evidence that food was cooked on board these merchantmen.

Reconstruction of the earliest evidence for a ship’s galley from the later Byzantine Yassiada shipwreck (ca. AD 650)

Reconstruction of the Kyrenia ship (ca. 300 BCE)
Kyrenia: *kantharos*

Ceramic forms normally used to drink wine

*kantharoi* from Tektaş Burnu

Dyonisos holding a *kantharos*

Kettle from Tektaş Burnu, chemical analysis reveals it was used to mix wine
Lamps illuminating any night time activities

One lamp (not pictured) recovered from the Kyrenia shipwreck

Ma’agan Mikhael

Tektaş Burnu
Alcohol on board a merchantman: passing the time (perhaps disreputably), but also probably useful in negotiating exchange in an atmosphere of conviviality.
Passing the time: probable gaming pieces with gaming comparanda from ancient Mediterranean shipwrecks of different periods

Classical Tektaş Burnu: 2 bone tiles (ca. 420 BCE)

knucklebones (*astragali*)
Late Bronze Age Uluburun (ca. 1330 BCE)

probable chess pieces
Byzantine Serce Limani (ca. AD 1000)
Getting to the business of sailing and ship maintenance

**Sailing and ship maintenance**

**Ma’agan Mikhael:**
Relevant stowed objects and materials include: wooden tenons, treenails and toggles, rope, a single lead ingot, anchors (lead anchor stocks)

**Kyrenia:**
Relevant stowed objects and materials include 12 unhewn tree limbs, mallets, lead rings (possibly spare eyelets for the sail), rolls of lead, anchors (lead anchor stocks)

**Tektaş Burnu:**
Anchors (lead anchor stocks), and no additional relevant objects and materials related to sailing and ship maintenance
Getting to the business of buying and selling

Five coins recovered from the Kyrenia shipwreck (one of them: mint of Demetrios Poliorketes, King of Macedonia, 306-283 BCE)

This not much, and where are the coins of the merchants from the other shipwrecks?
Getting to the business of defending oneself (?)

Why are there no weapons stowed away in these ships?

The only weapons were the javelins that appear to have been lodged into the hull of Kyrenia
By way of comparison, the range of weaponry found on the Late Bronze Age Uluburun shipwreck.
Social differentiation (i.e. between a ‘captain’, a ‘merchant’ and a ‘common sailor’) cannot be observed on these shipwrecks.
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